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LETTER

TO THE

RIGHT HONOURABLE

CHARLES JAMES FOX,

OCCASIONED BY

HIS SPEECH

AT THE

SHAKESPEARE TAVERN,

On the 10th October, 1797.

FROM A

YEOMAN OF ENGLAND.

London:

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1797.

Price One Shilling.

LETTER

RIGHT HONOURABLE

CHARLES JAMES FOX

RECEIVED

MRS. J. FOX



LETTER

SHAR

OF THE HOUSE OF COMMONS

1707

THOMAS OF ENGLAND

London:

PRINTED FOR JOHN STODOLSKY, HINDUSTAN

1707

OF THE HOUSE OF COMMONS

TO THE
RIGHT HONOURABLE

CHARLES JAMES FOX.

SIR,

IT so much more frequently happens, that men are enabled to set a just value upon their own conduct, when they attend to the remarks of their enemies, than when they give way to the more pleasurable encomiums of their admirers and partisans, that it may not be altogether unacceptable to you, to call your attention to a few observations which present themselves on the perusal of your Speech, as chairman of the late meeting held at the Shakespeare Tavern, to celebrate the anniversary of your first election for the city of Westminster.

I do so with the greater willingness, as, from the applauses which you, on that day, received from those around you, and from the active, and to you very flattering, endeavours which are making to disseminate your opinions*, you may very possibly be misled to over-rate the extent to which they coincide with those of the people of this country; and I even think myself in duty bound, as a well-wisher to the community, to stand forward and re-

* See Mr. Fox's Speech printed for those booksellers who superintend the publications of the Corresponding Societies.

pel the implied accusation which you bring against numbers of my fellow-countrymen, when you assume as a fact, that they agree to the doctrines which you advance, and that you have merited their consequent approbation by your late conduct in and out of Parliament.

If, at the same time, there should be any number, however small, amongst us, who, dazzled by the lustre of your genius, the brilliancy of your talents, or the powers of your eloquence, may have adhered to the desperate cause in which you are embarked, it is an office of good neighbourhood and affection to open their eyes to the danger to which you are exposing them, to dissipate the intoxicating effects which a natural, but mistaken reliance on your great abilities has produced on their minds; and to restore them to that unruffled state of happiness and contentment from which you have, unfortunately, succeeded in seducing them.

This can but ill be expected from those of your constituents who heard you on Tuesday the 10th instant. You contrived so ingeniously to blend your own praises with the admiration you were pleased to bestow on them for praising you, that it were difficult for any one of them, however much disposed to controvert your opinions, to do so, without renouncing that share of your eulogy on patriotism which it must be the wish of every man to deserve.

This happy interchange of reciprocal approbation was, no doubt, well calculated to produce the dilemma in your auditors, which you were aware would be most favourable to your views; and it
must

must be confessed, that you managed it with much adroitness.

To merit the applause of good men is a very natural wish of the human heart; but it might not, perhaps, be foreign to our subject to examine whether you were, at the moment of your speaking, surrounded by the most respectable of your constituents. Those gentlemen who appear the foremost and most eloquent of your counter-eulogists, are but bad specimens to produce in your favour; especially as even your friend Mr. Sheridan could not be induced, by the temptation of his health being drunk with three times three, to throw in his mite of Adulation *.

In the short review which you take of your parliamentary conduct for some years past, you think it necessary to account (in order to preserve that appearance of consistency which even you seem to consider as indispensable) for the friendship with which you say that you will speak of the late Earl of Guilford. You tell us, that although he was, in many respects, a bad minister—although he increased the influence of the crown, and trampled upon the rights and liberties of the people—although he imposed taxes, in support of principles hostile to those liberties, and enforced the payment of them by despotic means—yet that, with all these crimes upon his head, he had one good point about him—he did entertain some respect for the sentiments of the people: that is to say, that all his blemishes disappeared at the moment you found it

* It does not appear by the public papers whether Mr. Sheridan was present at the dinner: if he was prevented, by the distance of twenty-five miles, from attending it, this observation applies with still greater force.

convenient to retract your violent declamations in favour of the people and their liberties; and to coalesce with a man whom you had, a few weeks before, held out to them as an object of deserved horror and detestation, vainly hoping, by one bold sacrifice of all your former principles, to establish the permanency of your own power on the ruins of the throne.

Indeed, Sir, your allusion to your friendship with the late Earl of Guilford is a most unfortunate one, since it proves practically, and to the conviction of every capacity, that when disappointment and ambition alike urge you to raise their passions, the people are EVERY THING with you—when office and emolument come in view, they are NOTHING. In short, your not finding the present parliament and the present minister so much disposed as the parliament and the minister of the time to which you allude, to listen to your harangues, and be frightened by your imprecations, essentially constitutes the difference of which you complain. They have courage to withstand the malignity of your attacks, to despise the virulence of your abuse; and you anathematise them as traitors and malefactors.

In accounting for this mortifying change in the influence of your character, and this falling off of the powers of your elocution, you have recourse to a new and unheard-of argument. To prove that your conduct has been uniformly right, you endeavour to impeach the Virtue and Independence of a set of men, whom, until they became the meritorious objects of your enmity, neither the heat of party rage nor the animosity of disappointed ambition had dared to reproach with a dereliction of their country's interest: men, who by the integrity of their
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private lives, and by the zealous and active patriotism of their public conduct, hold out a glorious model of fortitude and wisdom to their fellow-subjects; who, under all circumstances, have been ready to administer to the exigencies of the state; to assist the indigent; to encourage, by their example, the loyal and well-disposed; and to repress the wicked and seditious: men who, in addition to every public tie to attach them to the national welfare, are bound also by the immense stake which their property gives them in its well-doing.—Such men are to be the subjects of your calumny—of your detraction! With whom, Sir, would you put them in competition? and what are the pitiful motives which you assign as regulators of their conduct?

You hold up as *your* supporters, whom you wish to become the objects of general imitation, the few individuals by whom you are at most times surrounded, and the populace throughout the country, whose characteristic has ever been to follow blindly the event of fortune, to disregard the dictates of a steady and enlightened policy, and to forget, in the changeableness of their own dispositions, the grounds on which they adopted *one* opinion as soon as *another* is obtruded upon them: a body so much in the habit of judging only from a momentary impression, without taking thought of the morrow's cares, that in the history of all nations, and at every period of such history, they have been easily engaged in any cause from the impulse of passion, which, without such impulse, they would have neglected; had the dearest interests of their country been at stake,

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By the attack which you have thus made upon the most valuable members of our community, you have completely thrown aside your political mask; you have unequivocally made known to us your sentiments, that the government of the country should not be carried on and supported by those who have inherited the virtues of an illustrious Ancestry; not by those who, under the influence of an improved Education, and a well-regulated system of Morals, are most likely to attend to and improve the Education and the Morals of the rising generation, to inculcate obedience to the laws, and an active zeal for the true welfare of the state; not by those who are bound to the interests of the country by every relation from which a grateful patriotism can arise, or which can strengthen natural attachment, and whose interests are so united with those of every other order, that not one of them can suffer without a general participation in their sufferings. No, Sir; it is evident that by such men you do not wish the country to be borne through the trying circumstances of its present critical situation.

To the multitude alone do you appeal for the approbation of the principles which you are desirous of introducing; to that multitude on whom you can yourself so little, ultimately, rely, that were the national good sense and energy so far to yield to the voice of faction, as to place you at the wished-for goal of your ambitious career, no sooner would you have reached the pinnacle of popular favour, than others, even still more factious than yourself, would undermine the fabric you had raised, and exhibit you to the world as an additional instance of the UNSTABLE TENURE OF DEMOCRATIC TURBULENCE. It should seem, indeed, as if with a distant view to such an event you say that you are not for
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destroying subordination or despising authority; (a negative kind of expression, by the way!) You add, soon after, that, in the changes you propose, the establishment of King, Lords, and Commons would be preserved.

But, Sir, even giving you that credit for the truth of these assertions, which many may be disposed to deny you, can you imagine that the majority of your auditors, or of those who are so active in distributing your printed Speech, and amongst whom it is likely to be distributed with the greatest success, will agree with you in this limitation of your views? Is it probable? I might say, is it, in the natural course of things, possible that when that dyke is broken down which surrounds our present establishment, and braves the impetuous dashings of the revolutionary surf, we can ever hope to re-establish our protecting barrier, and reduce the waves of sedition within the limits of their riotous Domain?

Do you think that even the energy of your transcendent abilities would stem the torrent of innovation, ready to rush in and sweep away the present happy bulwarks, by which the liberties, the property, and the social order of this country are defended?

But it does appear that such a calculation has occupied your mind; for you state, distinctly, to your constituents, the "alternative of a popular convulsion," and what you are pleased to term "a passage, by submissive silence, into an absolute tyranny." This latter expression can, according to your own premises, mean nothing but a continued submission on the part of the people of this country, to the salutary laws which have been en-

acted for the general good, and a grateful remembrance of the protection, both in person and property, which they have received from them. This must be the sum total of what you call an absolute tyranny, for you allude expressly to the occurrences of the last four years. And you must, if you admit this truth, allow yourself to be here at issue on the question, whether the laws passed within that period are to be submitted to, or whether, by means of a popular convulsion, we shall get rid of them altogether, and with them lose, as you well observe has been, and may again be the issue of such struggles, all the advantages that we derive from our present system of practical liberty and impartial laws. I venture to appeal to every man amongst us who understands his language, whether you do not unequivocally declare yourself in favour of the latter alternative.

You, of course, wish that your opinions should meet with the most general concurrence and acceptance. Should you be gratified in this respect, and should your opinions be acted upon with all the rage and violence which ever attend a popular commotion, we should be inevitably overwhelmed by the attack, and be subjected to all the horrors necessarily attendant on such a state of things.

I well remember that at the passing of the two Bills, to which you particularly allude, you endeavoured (happily for this country, in vain endeavoured) to impress us with a belief that they were to put an end to the liberties of the people; that we were all to be gagged and tongue-tied; that we were to lose in one instant, with the rapidity of pantomimic mechanism, all the blessings that we had derived from the revolution of 1688; that our be-
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loved monarch we were thenceforth to consider as a ruthless tyrant, and his ministers as the satellites of his despotism !

I have no doubt that these sinister forebodings of yours had some effect. Many loyal and well-disposed persons, who, although differing from you in their political sentiments, could never imagine that you would condescend to become the tool of faction, or oppose a necessary measure merely to answer party purposes, may have hesitated in their belief of the propriety of these bills. The unseemly pictures which you at all times drew of them, and the misrepresentations, as to their intended effect, which you and your friends caused to be circulated throughout the country, were well calculated to produce this hesitation.

But, Sir, in proportion to the weight which such persons were induced to attach to what they might have thought your disinterested admonition, so great was their indignation on finding that you attempted to make them the instruments by which to carry through your own private and personal views ; when they saw that for this purpose you wished to confound them with the deluded multitude, whose excesses the laws in question were designed to repress, and that you wanted to engage them in an opposition to measures on which alone they could rely for the protection of themselves, their families, and their estates, from the ravages of democratic fury ; Sir, in such proportion have you fallen in the estimation of all good and honest men.

You say that you have no means of arriving at accurate information as to the temper of the people

at large. I can in some measure supply this deficiency in the general stock of your own knowledge.

Having visited, in the course of the present year, many different and distant parts of our island, I have it in my power to furnish you with some very accurate information, which I well understand that your almost constant residence at St. Ann's Hill may not have allowed you opportunities of acquiring.

In the first place, give me leave to inform you, before I quit the subject of these bills, that the people of England, so far from considering them as the death-warrant of their liberties, look upon them rather as the strong holds by which their liberties are secured. Instead of seeing them executed with a savage and indiscriminating tyranny, by which they are themselves reduced to slavery, and their rights to an empty name, they find these laws administered with a firm and equal justice. These laws oppress none but the turbulent; they obstruct the circulation of no knowledge, except such as would serve to guide the traitor in his dark labyrinth of foul premeditation; they do not restrain the people from meeting under any circumstances, provided public notice be given of their being called together; nor do they impede the passage of such intercourse between the sovereign and his people as any real or even supposed grievances, on their part, may make them desirous of establishing, and which the benevolent and parental affections of His mind are ever most ready to encourage.

These bills, in a word, are universally allowed to have stopped the progress of that affiliation by which the

the spirit of Jacobinism, just now revived in France, was proceeding, by hasty strides, to overthrow the government of this country. And it is no less generally believed that were they, together with the Alien and Traitorous Correspondence bills, to be repealed, such an influx of French principles and their propagators would take place, and such assistance would they receive from the discontented few, which, in common with every other country, England contains, that we should ere long have our whole fabric of self-preservation to rear up again, or see, as was the case in 1795, ourselves, our property, and our King, exposed to the wild and traitorous attacks of a lawless rabble.

If you wish to recur to the most recent instance in which you had occasion to try the opinions of your own immediate friends upon this subject, I have only to remind you of that day in the last session of parliament on which you moved for the repeal of these bills. When, after several months of repeated procrastination, you were urged by the recollection of your promises at the hustings to agitate this question, not one of your political adherents was found hardy enough to advance an argument in favour of your attempt, and but few would venture to support it even by a silent vote.

That instance which you allege in support of your assertion of the despotism of these laws, I mean the meeting near Pancras on the 31st July, is considered throughout the country as the most striking proof of their utility; since nobody doubts, from the principles of those who called the meeting for the declared purpose of claiming the right of universal suffrage, and from the wonted irregularity of all mobs, that, under the pretence of a parliamentary reform,

reform, this meeting was about to agitate matters which tended ultimately to subvert, not only our present form of government, but all regular forms of government whatever.

If a sentiment of regret occurs on the occasion, it is, that the magistrate did not allow the orator Ferguson to proceed so far as to bring him more effectually under the operation of the laws which he was about to violate himself, and, what is worse, to encourage others, more ignorant and unwary than himself, to violate.

You next come to what passed in Scotland on carrying the militia act into execution.

You say "that you have been well assured that the newspaper accounts of the proceeding at Tranent are very mitigated, and below the mark."

Whence this assurance comes I know not; but from its complexion I should much suspect it to have been received from some of your friends in Scotland, who have since either fled the justice of their country, or have actually incurred the sentence of the law, and whose criminal designs were frustrated by the firmness and resolution of the magistrates, and by the timely interference of the troops; of those troops who are not prepared, as you would represent them, to destroy the liberties of the country, but who have given so recent, so glorious, and to themselves so honourable a proof that they are not to be enlisted under the banners of rebellion, that they can resist the machinations, however insidious, of the Jacobin emissary; and that they will continue to support their well-earned reputation by
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a faithful and steady allegiance to their sovereign, and by a strenuous support of the lawful government of their country.

Of the principle on which you wish to explode such interference, little need be said. You would not, I presume, be yourself disposed to deny that, where the civil power is insufficient to support itself in the due execution of the laws, the aid of the military ought to be called in: but by what mode of reasoning or new-fangled doctrine of rights you would deprive men, because they have devoted themselves to an honourable and arduous profession, of the privilege of maintaining inviolate the laws of their country, and of repressing the hand of Treason and Rebellion, I am at a loss to conceive. Why, because a soldier wears a red coat, it is not as allowable for him voluntarily to assist in preserving order and tranquillity, as for you or for me who wear blue or brown ones, remains hitherto unexplained. Nobody would, I believe, call either of *us* to account for affording our assistance on such an occasion.

Is it because of this difference in the outward dress that the soldier is tamely to submit his life to the disposal of a licentious mob? or does it compel him to become a passive spectator of all the violent proceedings of such a meeting? Hard, indeed, would his fate be, if, at the moment he contracts the solemn engagement to defend his country and his king, he were of necessity to resign the interest which he as a man, perhaps as the father of a family, must, in common with us all, feel in the well-being and good order of society! Such an exchange would ill requite him for the labours of the career upon which he has entered.

But

But no, Sir; British soldiers will *not* stoop to become the instruments of faction; nor will all the Calumny and Opprobrium which you and your party are endeavouring to heap upon them, drive them from their allegiance, or induce them to swerve in any instance from their Duty.

Your mention of Mr. Henry Erskine, late Dean of the Faculty in Scotland, however uninteresting his case may be to the public here, leads me to observe briefly upon it, that, if the collective body of barristers in Scotland were desirous of preserving pure and untainted that reputation for Loyalty and Patriotism which they have so long enjoyed, it was very natural for them to wish to displace a man who, from his principles and conduct, they considered as unworthy to preside amongst them. I am no more acquainted with Mr. Henry Erskine than yourself, and, for that very reason, I conceive that those who are, and who have daily opportunities of observing his sentiments and his actions, must be the best judges how far he was qualified for the situation of which you so pathetically lament that he was deprived.

As for what you say of Mr. Thomas Erskine, nobody wishes to call in question his great and powerful professional abilities. We have seen that he can make a speech as well against as for Tom Paine; that he can with equal ingenuity defend and reprobate the adulterer: but we have *not* yet seen that he has divested himself of one particle of that vanity and self-importance of which his sensibility on hearing your praises is so evident a symptom. Indeed, the world would not think the less favourably of either of you, if you were to reserve for your private meetings those fulsome panegyrics of each other,

other, which, although they may call forth the acclamations of a dinner party at the Shakespeare, cannot for a moment impose upon us who are not under the immediate influence of the fumes of your tumultuous orgies.

The affairs of Ireland next engage your attention.

You say that in that country liberty is totally annihilated. You give us Mr. Grattan as your authority, by whom you are, I suppose, likewise informed that government burn houses, men, and cattle, all in one general conflagration, and "that the destruction of human beings is regarded only as the loss of so much inanimate property."

One would hardly suppose that you were addressing yourselves to men who can read and write, and convey their thoughts from place to place. Such miserable contrivances are only fit to impose on children, whose powers of reflection are not yet arrived at a state of maturity, and who naturally give way to the impression of any produce of the imagination that is horrible and terrific.

I should really have thought, had I not seen that you addressed a meeting in which were men not deficient in abilities, that you were holding forth in an infant seminary of future republicans, whom you wished, at that early period, to wean altogether from any innate affection they might feel for royalty, or indeed for any other system than that of anarchy. I should have thought that you meant to frighten them out of their youthful propensities to Royalty, as some foolish mothers endeavour to divert their children from a vicious inclination, by terrifying
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them with the appearances of Ghosts and Hobgoblins.

But that you should deliberately, and with premeditation, endeavour to impress upon the minds of his Majesty's subjects falsehoods, which you must know to be such, and to alienate them, by such means, from the obedience which they owe to the laws, is a conduct which, if it does not bring you under the cognizance of any existing law, must create, in the mind of every man who loves his country, a lively regret that there is not upon the Statute-book a mean of silencing Misrepresentation so flagrant and so atrocious.

And now, Sir, I will beg leave to revert to the avowed object of all this your declamation. I say, Sir, the *avowed* object; for you must not suppose us to possess such very limited understandings as not to see that the accounting for your Secession from the House of Commons is a very secondary point in your consideration.

True it is that you did secede, and it will never be forgotten that you selected for that purpose the moment when we beheld with terror and dismay the unprecedented spectacle of a mutiny throughout the British fleet. True also it is, that at that awful moment, when others had buried in a temporary oblivion the spirit of party, you withheld your counsels from your country, and refused either to pronounce your disapprobation of the mutineers, or your concurrence in the measures that were adopted to reduce them to a proper sense of their Duty.

This disgraceful passage in your political life will, you may be assured, never be forgotten when it shall

shall become the task of the Historian to transmit to posterity the narrative of your public character, never deficient in activity but at that crisis when a well-directed activity was most essential to the public safety.

You tell us, however, that you think yourself bound to inform your constituents of the motives that have induced you to change the line of your parliamentary conduct ; a conduct which, you assure us, has invariably met, more or less, with their approbation. This indeed did require some explanation, although I even apprehend that that which you have given will not appear very satisfactory.

But let me remove this flimsy veil from the eyes of those of your constituents who are not determined blindly to sacrifice themselves, by a headlong adherence to all your wild, fantastic schemes.

I will tell them, Sir, what you dared not yourself avow, that it is not the conduct of this or that House of Commons that you wish to set before them and arraign : it is not so much the tenets of any particular set of individuals of that House that you wish them to condemn. What your object really may be, I will not take upon myself to declare ; but I will assert, that the inevitable tendency of your language is to dissolve altogether the authority of King, Lords, and Commons ; to set at defiance the united powers of the whole Legislature ; and to replace it by the sovereign will of a Mobocracy, of which you would vainly flatter yourself with becoming the Comptroller.

It is only an additional insult upon the public

understanding to dispute the fact. You must be aware that your Seceſſion from Parliament has not been attended by that deſponding effect upon the public mind which you doubtleſs ſuppoſed would have been the conſequence of it. The people have given a pretty ſure earneſt, in the interval that has elapſed ſince you made your Declaration of Seceſſion, of the light in which they ſhould continue to look upon that ſtep. They have ſhown unequivocally, by their indifference on that ſubject, that they have not yet ſo far yielded to your wiſhes as to conſider *you* as their only repreſentative; or to believe that in you alone, and in the few individuals who have acted with you, are veſted all the Patriotiſm and Public Virtue of the country.

You have on various occaſions declared yourſelf to be the ſole and excluſive organ of the people's will; you have declared, that you alone were competent to judge of their intereſts and inclinations: but the people have *not* ratified your declarations.

They have, in ſpite of all your endeavours, continued that firm and unſhaken confidence in their choſen repreſentatives, of which every ſucceeding election gives new proofs.

Even the great object of your complaint (the removal of members of the Houſe of Commons to the Houſe of Peers) affords us an indiſputable argument for controverting your bold aſſertions.

— Theſe Gentlemen, whom a long courſe of unremitting attention to the public ſervice entitles to their Sovereign's Favour, receive the higheſt Honour which his Maſteſty can confer, that of being appointed to the office of hereditary counſellors of his crown.

crown. The representation of large and populous counties is thereby vacated; and have we, in any instance, seen that men have been returned by them who were ready to support you or your principles, and to overthrow all that the wisdom of the Legislature during the last four years has accomplished?

Little more than a year has elapsed since the whole nation had an opportunity of expressing its sense of the measures of administration. I know that upon that occasion the hopes of your party were feelingly alive to the prospect which they thought in view, of increasing their numbers in Parliament. Yet, did the event answer your expectation? Did the people seem disposed to trust their affairs to men whom they have long since declared to be unworthy of their confidence? In short, did any increase of numbers attend your divisions of the House of Commons, in consequence of the last general election?

How then is it that you wish to monopolize to yourself alone the understanding of the whole nation?

How is it that, because you cannot convert the national representation to your own profligate tenets, you attempt to vilify and traduce it?

Believe me, Sir, that that sensation amongst the people which you would falsely represent as a general torpor and deadness on public affairs, is no other than a firm and manly resolution, the true characteristic of Britons, with which they oppose themselves to the arduousness, or, if you will, the misfortune of their situation. It is a noble, and, to the thinking mind, a more animating instance
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of their steady adherence to the Public Weal, than all the buzzings of a tumultuous populace which the declamations of any demagogue can produce.

Sir, it is by this persevering Fortitude of the people of England (by which they have, during the present war, so eminently distinguished themselves amongst the nations of the world), that they are enabled to support the burdens which the war necessarily imposes on them, and to submit patiently to the calamities which, in the course of a long and unprecedented struggle, it may please the Hand of Providence to inflict: by this Fortitude, too, are they prompted to resist the delusive temptations that are made use of to withdraw them from their duty.

They well know, and it requires not the Arts of Oratory to prove it to them, that War is inevitably attended with many misfortunes of a public and a private nature; that it cannot be carried on without the imposition of taxes; and that those taxes must fall indiscriminately upon every member of the state. They know that blood and treasure must be spent to oppose the inroads of that savage system of warfare in which neither the effusion of human blood, nor the expenditure of the public money, are, in the slightest degree, regarded by their enemies.

But, although these are the misfortunes of the situation into which they have been brought by the encroaching ambition of that enemy, the people of this country are willing to submit to them rather than to the imperious dictates of an insolent and haughty foe. They feel that, in the course of this war, they have received from the government in which they place their confidence, protection in their persons and property; they feel, that the sedition

ditionous and patricidal designs of their domestic enemies have been frustrated; and now, that the enjoyment of the blessings of peace seemed to have dawned upon them, they are not less resolutely determined to oppose the unwarrantable pretensions of their foreign enemy, and to forego the participation in those blessings, until they can be received without shame and dishonour to us as a great nation.

They have discovered, amidst the artifices that have been made use of, by certain authors and orators in this country, to conceal the real intentions of the enemy, what the secret object of that enemy is. They see that concession after concession may be made by Great Britain, and that the government of France will yet find some pretext for procrastinating the happy moment of peace. It is now well understood, from the fair and liberal advances of our government, that neither the restoration of peace, nor even the prosecution of war, on any *ordinary* principles, can be the object of our enemies.

It is seen that, as the existence of the present French Directory can be coëval only with the state of anarchy and confusion in which it is placed, and in which alone its late outrageous and unheard-of infraction of public and private justice could have been tolerated, so must that body be still averse from the re-establishment of such an order of things as (without a reference to any particular form of government) would be altogether inconsistent with their views.

They allow not of tranquillity at home; that would open many a scrutinizing eye to the atrociousness of their proceedings; and, to perpetuate
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confusion there, they must have recourse to their too powerful means of promoting it abroad.

For this purpose, and to resist the piercing cries of their own people, what extravagant pretensions do they not bring forward !

Whilst negotiating with our allies, they state their own conquests, their own successes on the continent, in support of their demands, that Towns and Provinces should be ceded to them ; that France should know no Boundaries, but such as their own insatiable thirst of Power and Aggrandisement may chuse to appoint : but this argument is to hold only on their own case. In *our* negotiations we naturally speak of the victories obtained by our countrymen, of the conquests which their valour has achieved ; but they, forsooth, are to avail us nothing. We are first to restore all that we have taken from the French and their allies ; to beg pardon for having dared to face them in battle ; and then, by virtue of a most gracious spirit of condescension, it *may* be considered on what farther terms of Humiliation peace is to be granted to us.

Sir, can you, for a moment, suppose, that the people of this country have so grievously degenerated from their pristine character, as to submit to such treatment ? Have even you so entirely divested yourself of the spirit of an Englishman, as to advise them to submit to it ?

What your own opinion may be of the conduct which we should hold towards our enemies, is a point on which you have observed a cautious silence. By not pledging your assistance and co-operation to your country, you afford the enemy no unreasonable expecta-

expectation of again ranking you amongst the champions of his exorbitant demands. From this silence also we may infer, that you mean to avail yourself of your Seceſſion as an excuſe for abandoning the performance of thoſe promiſes of unanimity in proſecuting the war, to which you ſo ſtrictly bound yourſelf, in the event of the enemy's rejecting our equitable propoſals.

But, Sir, I have not yet gone with you the whole length of our enemy's intended career.

Had any proof been wanting, that the real object of their policy is not the recovery of a Town, or an Iſland, but the total ſubverſion of every government which they think inimical to their own (and in this light they conſider every monarchical government in Europe, as we ſee by the renewal of their oath againſt Royalty in general), they have given ſufficient evidence upon that point within the laſt month.

That they have virtually proceeded to the overthrow of every monarchy over which their Arms, or their Intrigues, have given them any influence, may be ſeen by the ſtate of thoſe countries which, owing to the timorous conduct of the people, or to the perfidious Weakneſs of ignorant and upſtart miniſters, they now reckon amongſt their allies.

If, Sir, the penury of the times does not admit of your employing; as uſual, an accredited emiſſary on the continent*, ask thoſe whom you may be yourſelf

* From the preſent ſtate of the public diſcuſſion which Mr. Adair's journey to St. Petersburgh, in the year 1791, has undergone, I can find no reaſon to doubt that that gentleman was in fact employed

self disposed to think the best informed, and let them tell you, whether at the Hague, at the courts of Berlin, Madrid, Turin, and Naples, it is a Dutch, a Prussian; a Spanish, a Piedmontese, or a Neapolitan minister who governs; or whether the French ambassador does not usurp a tyrannical and unbounded control over all their measures. If you consider the state of these countries, you will not conclude that such measures lead to order and tranquillity, or that they can ultimately tend to any thing but the Overthrow of those who have the weakness or the misfortune to adopt them.

Do you wish for a nearer and still more convincing proof of the intentions of the French on the countries where they get a footing? Look at Italy: look at their late operations on the Rhine, where, to the overbearing turbulence of their own revolutionary system, they have added a daring and most flagrant violation of their national faith *.

Can it be doubted, Sir, that they are endeavouring to reduce this country to the same perilous and

played by you in your capacity of leader of the opposition party in this country, to counteract and thwart the measures of our government.

It is, indeed, much to the credit of those who THEN acted with you, that we have been informed from indubitable authority that this step was taken without their sanction or concurrence; a circumstance which only renders the more obvious your exclusive adherence to a power at that time engaged in real, although not declared hostility to your country.

* It is not denied by the French themselves, that, in the preliminaries of peace signed at Leoben between the Emperor and the French, the restitution of Mantua to his Imperial Majesty, and the integrity of the German empire, were expressly stipulated. All Europe knows how much the present Directory is inclined to comply with these its engagements.

dependent situation? Should we hesitate to proclaim to the people of this country, because the enemy wish to conceal the real object of their hostilities, that they DO AIM AT THE SUBVERSION OF OUR HAPPY AND MOST EXCELLENT CONSTITUTION, and that it is only by a persevering resistance to such attempts that we can long enjoy the blessings which it affords?

The GREAT AND GLORIOUS EVENT which at this moment produces throughout the nation such genuine raptures of joy and exultation, whilst it shows us the first steps that were to lead to the execution of the enemy's designs, demonstrates likewise with what confidence we, in resisting those designs, may rely on the support and co-operation of our national force.

This event, Sir, the brilliancy of which language is too feeble to describe, and the good consequences of which no power short of Omniscience can venture to enumerate, proves that, however, under unavoidable and fortuitous circumstances, the enemy may be able, for a moment, to elude our vigilance, he cannot possibly, and with his utmost efforts, withstand the resistless bravery of our FLEETS. It proves, too, how impotent and fruitless the attempts of incendiary traitors must in the end be, when employed to seduce our naval brethren from their duty, or to persuade them to betray, in the pursuit of their own interests, the honour or the interests of their country.

To the enemy it will prove how vain are their hopes of success in their projected Invasion. May it inspire them with that spirit of moderation and equity, of which we have, in our late overtures for
D 2 peace,

peace, given them so generous an example! or, may it at length rouse from their lethargy an injured and oppressed people, and lead them, through their own exertions, to the possession of that peace and prosperity, which the profligacy of their present rulers prevents them from enjoying.

And now, Sir, having thus endeavoured to impress you with what I affirm to be the sentiments of the very great majority of our fellow-subjects, allow me briefly to state to you the situation in which I conceive that your late conduct has placed you.

Few men possess greater powers of acquiring public favour and applause than yourself, because few men are endowed with the splendid abilities which you can boast: and it is but justice to add, that few are invested with more extensive qualities than yourself for conciliating, I may say captivating, the popular affections.

But when we see you condescend to adopt the language, and countenance the impudent and mendacious assertions of a TOOKE and a THELWALL, and submit to be thought the convert of a Ferguson; professing yourself to be a disciple of their school, to an extent which even they avow themselves unable to surpass*; when you substitute to pure eloquence and refined argument the empty declamations of a French demagogue, we no longer regard, in you, the enlightened statesman, or the patriotic orator; but we turn with disgust and ab-

* See Horne Tooke's association with Mr. Fox at the close of the fourteenth day's poll of the last Westminster election; when his joy was so great at finding so perfect a coincidence in their views, that he declared it "ALMOST UNNECESSARY FOR HIM TO UTTER ONE WORD AFTER WHAT MR. FOX HAD SAID."

horrence

horrence from the disgraceful picture which you exhibit to the world, of APOSTATE PATRIOTISM AND PERVERTED GENIUS.

To sum up the charges against you; you denounce the landed interest of Great Britain, for no other reason than because it has condemned your principles as dangerous; and you now call upon the people to risk a convulsion, in order to produce an entire radical reform, not only in the House of Commons, but also in every branch of the executive power; and, for that purpose, you have told them, that when they shall declare themselves plainly and decidedly of your opinion, they will find in you *a ready, active, and obedient servant*, OUT OF PARLIAMENT, OF COURSE, FOR YOU HAVE SECEDED FROM IT, AND AGAINST IT, BECAUSE YOU DECLARE THAT THE DESTRUCTION OF ITS PRESENT FORM IS YOUR OBJECT.

You have but one chance left for placing yourself on the list as a candidate for public favour.

No longer show yourself a partisan of the enemies of your country. Let them see that, however party motives may, for a while, lead you astray from the right path, you have not yet abandoned its dignity, but will stand foremost to assert its rights, and to avenge its insulted Honour.

Make use of your influence to unite rather than to distract the public mind, and we shall with pleasure account and venerate you amongst the number of our true patriots.

A YEOMAN OF ENGLAND.

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